

tained in the interest of such companies, and in some cases are even discouraged from making public what for a time can be used to advantage in a commercial way and classed among the trade secrets. I speak knowingly on this subject, for the first question that was asked me in 1889, before I was solicited to report on the subject of transmission of power by electricity, was whether I was retained in the interest of any electric company. The fact that patent litigation has played so important a part in the development of electricity is also to be taken into account when an effort is made to awaken debate on subjects that should be of special interest in the Society founded by the early electrician, Benjamin Franklin. Many men are loath to commit themselves in debate that may in a short time be taken hold of by patent attorneys. The commercial aspect of scientific advance is too important to be ignored; we must therefore, as members of the American Philosophical Society, as far as we can, induce others to assist in the work of the Society by showing a willingness to take an active part in the meetings that are held in this room, and by early publication of matter submitted give precedent in publication to those who lay claims to priority of discovery.

Stated Meeting, April 21, 1899.

Vice-President SELLERS in the Chair.

Present, 17 members.

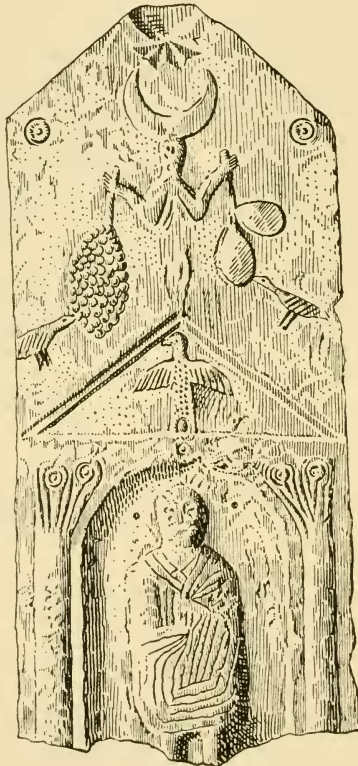
The Curators announced that, in accordance with a resolution of the Society, the Carthaginian tombstone in its possession had been photographed, and exhibited a blue print of same (see accompanying figure, page 72).

The death of Sir Monier-Monier Williams, of London, England, April 11, 1899, who was elected a member December 17, 1886, was announced.

Dr. Stellwagen made a verbal communication to the Society in regard to a tombstone presented by Commodore Stellwagen,

on behalf of Mr. Perry, which was brought from Carthage. He said :

It was in the spring of 1864, if my memory serves me correctly, that, at the urgent request of the Consul-General of the United States, Mr. Amos Perry, the U. S. S. "Constellation," of which I was an officer, paid a visit to the Bey of Tunis, as trouble with the Bedouins had caused alarm among the European residents.



Carthaginian Tombstone.

The Consul requested my father, Captain Henry S. Stellwagen, U. S. Navy, to bring two gravestones or stelae to this country and send one each to scientific bodies in Philadelphia and New York. The one exhibited here this evening was first given into the care of the Academy of Natural Sciences, but afterwards, at the suggestion of an officer of that body, it was sent to the American Philosophical Society.

At the time of our visit the ruins of Carthage were so completely

hidden by the overlying soil and fine débris that the localities of the famous city were but vaguely known. This stone stela was found in the region of the temple of Astarte, and by many of those who examined it the relief was considered to be a figure of the Goddess Astarte feeding carnivorous, and presumably sacred, animals with the entrails and genitals of the victim of a sacrifice.

I was discouraged at the very meagre results obtained by antiquarians who had studied the locality, and shocked to contemplate how entirely that great city was obliterated. Once she claimed to control the whole western Mediterranean Sea so effectually that "no one could wash his hands in it without her permission." Her fleets and armies, her agriculture and pomology, her stock raising and her temples are only known to us through her enemies, the Romans; but these naturally biased historians freely acknowledged that she excelled the world. At the time of our visit only mounds of earth were to be seen there, covered with very small fragments of different-colored marbles, some fine large pieces of marble steps that evidently had formed portions of a great stairway to the sea gate, and a number of large subterranean reservoirs supposed to have been used for water storage, these being in pretty fair condition, and in strong contrast with the utter and absolute ruin of all else.

Which was followed by a verbal communication by Dr. Morris, as follows :

It has been said that Abdel Kader when brought as a prisoner to Paris was taken to Versailles and asked his opinion as to the celebrated paintings of the battles in Africa, where he had borne such an heroic part. He replied that "if an Arab had portrayed them he would probably have done so very differently." It is well for us to remember that nearly all we know of the Carthaginian empire, people or customs has come to us through Roman sources, and that the "Punica fides" which we have learned of in our childhood might seem very different if heard of from the other side. While I would not be considered as an apologist for the worship of Astarte, which we know of from Syrian and Phœnician as well as from Greek and Roman sources, passing as it does into that of Aphrodite and Nero, of Venus and Juno, or of sexual love, whether normal and pure or abnormal and illicit, it still remains true that

*C'est toujours l'amour, l'amour,
Qui fait le monde à la ronde.*

Human nature has been and is the same in all climes, ages, civilizations and religions; and it behooves us in inquiring about them to treat them fairly as we would seek to have done to our own views. It is in this manner I would study this relic, all too rare, as our friend, Dr. Thomas C. Stellwagen has just shown us, of Carthaginian civilization. It is a white sandstone slab, the lower part of which has been broken off and the upper corners sloped nearly but not quite to a point. It is 2 feet 5 inches

long, 1 foot $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches broad, and 5 inches thick. At the top is a ✱, which I take to be intended to represent the sun: on each of the corners of the sloping and straight sides two small concentric circles ☉, which I take as intended to represent planets (Mars and Jupiter?): and on the upper part of the slab the figure of Astarte with its crescent, holding a pomegranate in the right hand, from which a beast is feasting, and in the left a bunch of dates plucked at by a bird. Under this figure of Astarte, thus emblematic of the love-passion as alike furnishing fertility and prosperity to all living beings, is the entablature of a temple or house with rude Corinthian columns, and an eagle, while beneath is the figure of a man calmly standing, wrapped in a robe. Herodianus (*circa* 150 A. D.) tells us of the custom prevailing at the beatification of an emperor among the Romans. An eagle was bound on the funeral pyre so that when it was lighted and the bonds burned the living bird soared aloft bearing the soul of the deceased to the empyrean, and the Emperor became Divus. May not this well explain this figure standing in the porch of the house or temple ready to pass through the region presided over by Love into the vast beyond where Light and Order still prevail? and how far would such a faith differ from that held by the most of us to-day?

This stone, I believe, formed the doorway of a vault or sarcophagus such as may be not infrequently found on or near the shores of the Mediterranean, and may well aid us in our inquiries into the real beliefs of those who passed so long ago into the Great Beyond.

On each side of the head of the man's figure is a small hole such as would receive a tenon on a bronze plaque, which may have covered this figure, as we see brasses on the graves of Crusaders in old cathedrals. If this were so, this monument, had it contained the man's name, would have, like Horace's, proved "Aere perennius."

The Society was adjourned by the presiding officer.

Stated Meeting, May 5, 1899.

Vice-President SELLERS in the Chair.

Present, 21 members.

Gen. Isaac J. Wistar read an obituary notice of the late Richard A. Tilghman.

The Secretaries announced the death at Philadelphia, on May 2, of Alexander Biddle, aged 80 years.

The following papers were read:

By Mr. R. H. Mathews, of Parramatta, New South Wales,
 "On Divisions of North Australian Tribes."